



## A Missouri Pioneer

By COL. JOHN R. MUSICK.

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We left George McNair standing in the gathering gloom of evening at the door of the little log cabin.

Next day one of Mr. Van Loon's school-boys who had wandered farther into the woods than usual returned to report that he had met a strange hunter. When the day's work was over, the school-master lingered longer than usual, waiting for one whom he knew would come.

He was not in the least surprised when he heard the sound of footsteps coming from the woods, and before he looked up knew it was George McNair.

"What did father say?" was the first word he asked.

"He was glad to hear from you."

"And you told mother?"

"Yes."

"But no right?"

"Your father thinks it may be compromised with the Sheriff."

George shook his head, and said: "No, no; La Boone is my true enemy, and will let no compromise be made."

"Your case is not with La Boone, but the Sheriff. He and La Boone are not the best of friends."

"Yet, the Sheriff belongs to him, and would do his bidding. La Boone has money, and can hire him."

"I don't know. No one knows La Boone better than I, but the Sheriff, it seems, has some resolution of his own, and is unwilling to be used as a tool."

George had little confidence, however, in the Sheriff's independence, and to change the subject asked:

"Has La Boone been here today?"

"No. The matter will have to go through the courts, and the law's delays are proverbial."

"These father think he will win?"

"He does not. He fears La Boone may hire witnesses to swear falsely."

"That's what he will try to do, and if he can find a witness to swear falsely, your father is going to St. Louis."

"To consult his lawyer?"

"Yes."

"Who is his lawyer?"

"He has decided on Judge Lucas."

"The father of his former attorney?"

"Yes."

"I hope he will win. Had the other man lived, there would have been no doubt of it."

"Why are you so assured?"

"He told father before he was killed he had evidence that would defeat La Boone."

Then Van Loon fell into a brown study. He wondered what that evidence could be.

"La Boone is a great rascal, and was not beyond corrupting witnesses. On one occasion he offered to bribe me to swear falsely, but I told him I would not do so," said Van Loon.

"Do you know whose land it was?"

"No. I never asked him, nor do I suppose he would tell."

"Why did he think he could use your evidence?"

"I have assisted the clerk in the Land Office, two or three times."

"If he would try to bribe me to swear falsely, he would bribe others, no doubt."

"I wish I could go to father, but I dare not."

"Your father said he wanted to see you."

"Why can't he? He could come here and no suspicion be aroused."

"Yes, he would come, too, if you would wait."

"At what time?"

"Midnight."

"I will wait."

"You might sleep in the school-house."

"And you will tell no one?"

"No, no; no one but your father."

"I will be glad to see him. I wish I could see mother and the others, but the Sheriff, or some of his deputies, may be in the neighborhood yet, and I won't dare go there."

"Not now. Your father may get the Sheriff to dismiss the case against you."

"I hope he will, but don't believe he can."

"Now, I am going to your father and will tell him. He will come here at midnight. You can sleep in the school-room and wait for him." Then Van Loon took his departure, leaving him in the school-house.

It was not until the shades of night began to gather over the frowning forest that it occurred to the mind of the youth that possibly some wanderer had spied him in the forest and reported him to the Sheriff. Even at that moment, for aught he knew, a strong posse might be moving through the woods, and he would be as good as a dead man.

George had resisted the law, and in his own eyes he was a heinous outlaw. Not knowing what the penalty of resistance would be, he thought it best to be on his guard.

He gazed from the wide gap in the end of the house called the window, and tried to pierce the gathering darkness, but in vain. Sometimes he imagined the wavering shadows were men or moving objects.

He stretched his form out on one of the long benches and tried to sleep, but a strange emotion had possessed him, which impelled every one in the presence of the supposed assassin.

Half closing his eyes, half asleep and half awake, he saw crescent-like shadows gliding before him, and saw a man in a suit and hat, with a cane, standing near the left door. Sometimes these took form and he saw a hideous monster standing near pointing the finger of detection at him, and at other times he saw like the original Punch, which he had once seen an engraving. He seemed to hold him in his hand, and he seemed to see him in the air.

At last, with an effort, he started up, and opening his eyes found the dreadful thing only the shadow of his light slumber and troubled mind.

Again he lay upon the hard bench, tried to keep his eyes open and retain his rationality. But days of toil, anxiety, and the great mental strain through which he had gone overcame him, and he, half asleep and half awake, saw a small figure apparently created out of the shadows.

It was a soldier carrying a musket and fixed bayonet. He leveled the gun at him; but George was powerless to move. He wondered why he did not fire, but the creature simply retained his position, until, by another effort, he dispelled the vision, and sat up, and meeting him.

He dozed again, and visions of strange faces haunted him, and in an effort to keep them from his awake, the spell was broken, and the face of the lawyer came from the forest. He ran to the broad window, but as the new-comers were approaching from the other side he was unable to see them.

He crept back to the east end of the house, and taking his bowie-knife from his belt picked out the door leading between the logs, catching the light from his hand to keep it from falling and rattling on the floor.

The keen knife made a small hole

in the wall, and stooping down he applied his eye to it, and gazing out saw a four or five dark forms stealthily approaching the school-house. Could it be the Sheriff or La Boone with a posse trying to capture him? A hickory tree stood a few rods from the door of the house. The children had made a swing of green bark to swing between the tree and the house, and were now swinging where the little folks had run and swung each other.

He saw no less than three men standing in the center of the road, and voices fell on his ear, he could not distinguish their words. They stood close together and talked in a low tone.

Two of them still stood and motionless as statues set against the dark background. At last one moved off to the right, and passed beyond his range of vision.

"That was right."

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## How About Your Heart

Feel your pulse a few minutes. Is it regular? Are you short of breath, after slight exertion as going up stairs, sweeping, walking, etc? Do you have pain in left breast, side or between shoulder blades, choking sensations, fainting or smothering spells, inability to lie on left side? If you have any of these symptoms you certainly have a weak heart, and should immediately take

**Dr. Miles' Heart Cure**

Mr. F. H. Oaks of Jamestown, N. Y., whose genial face appears above, says: "I feel glad to say that I am now a healthy man, and my heart is in good shape."

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girl, living with us, and he took a notion to her, so he went and got appointed her guardian. "There's something back of that, now, do you just make my word; that's something back of that. Old La Boone does not do that. He does not see a dollar in just what he's up to, no one knows, but he's up to something."

"Did right, too?"

"That's what I say, though mother thinks he made a mistake. I see, because 'll be of age in a little more than a year, and won't need any guardian. La Boone can't get her."

"Not after she's of age."

"Well, now that's all very good. I wish they'd hang that old scoundrel. What d'ye think he'd do in your lawsuit?"

"I don't know. I am going to make the very hardest fight I can for my property."

"That's the right thing to do." At this moment dinner was announced and they arose and went to the "entry," where the table had been spread.

"St. Charles without accident or adventure, and went to the tavern. Next day he hunted up the Sheriff, whom he found getting ready to go in one of his wagons, and said:

"Good morning, Mr. McNair. Glad to see you. Come 't look after yer suit, did ye?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I hope ye'll come out all right."

"I want to talk with you," said the pioneer.

"I ain't got nothing to do with it now," the Sheriff explained. "I just served the writ, an' then it goes into the hands of the clerk and lawyers. I ain't got a thing to do with it."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that," he added in an undertone; "but I don't say nothing."

"It isn't that I want to talk with you about it. I want to talk with you about it."

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